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ABSTRACT

The role of libraries with regard to post-literate people is to provide suitable follow up reading material for these people so that they do not relapse into illiteracy. A public library service plays an indispensable part in any progressive educational system. It is particularly essential for the success of any literacy campaign and the adult education program in general. The part the Tanganyika Library Service plays in post-literacy education is the subject of this paper. The Tanganyika Library Service has been given the responsibility of promoting, establishing, equipping, managing, maintaining and developing libraries in mainland Tanzania. Emphasis of the current Five Year Development Plan (1969-1974) is on the extension of services to rural areas. The Tanganyika Library Service promotes the publication of books by guaranteeing a market for new books through the purchase of multiple copies which are distributed to all service points in the country. The role of the library in post-literate programs is especially important in countries with a small per capita income for it is the only source of free reading material. (Author/NH)

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NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF TANZANIA SEMINAR
NOVEMBER 17 and 18, 1972.

POST LITERACY AND BEYOND
THE ROLE OF CLUBS AND LIBRARIES IN POST LITERACY ADULT EDUCATION.

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[illegible] ROLE OF LIBRARY SERVICE IN POST LITERACY [illegible] EDUCATION.

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AFTER LITERACY WHAT? NEXT ?

The role of libraries in post literacy education

By Mr. Ezekiel E. Kaungamno, B.A. MLS
Director, Tanganyika Library Service.

First of all I would like to identify the type of people who should be served by libraries in post literacy.

Nikhil Ranjan Roy has pointed out that "for the purpose of consus enumeration in India ability to write a simple letter or message and to read the same is considered to be a person's qualification for being counted as literate. But he points out further that the value of such nominal literacy is highly dubious for all practical purposes. The ability to just scribble one's name, and to stammer through a school primer does not take one far enough. The doubful signature of a borderline literate is much less reliable than his thumb-impression which cannot be copied."[1]

This kind of literate person is definitely not of much use to society. I would like therefore to adopt a more liberal concept of literacy as defined by Unesco:

> "Literacy is to help men and women to live fuller and richer lives in adjustment to the changing environment, to develop the best element, in their culture, and to achieve social and economic progres which will enable them to take their place in the modern world."[2]

In other words our focus should be more on functional literacy which relates literacy to solving work problems and the upgrading of the quality of manpower available for social and economic development.

What then is the role of libraries with regard to post - literate people? The answer is straight foward. Libraries are supposed to provide suitable follow up reading material for these people so that they do not relapse into illiteracy. A public library service plays an indispensable part in any progressive educational system. It is particularly essential for the success of any literacy compaign and the adult education programme in general. Ideally before a literacy campaign is started there must be a sufficient supply of

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What then is the role of libraries with regard to post - literate people? The answer is straight foward. Libraries are supposed to provide suitable follow up reading material for these people so that they do not relapse into illiteracy. A public library service plays an indispensable part in any progressive educational system. It is particularly essential for the success of any literacy compaign and the adult education programme in general. Ideally before a literacy campaign is started there must be a sufficient supply of suitable reading material . Starting a campaign without adequate and suitable follow-up material is in fact putting the cart before the horse. And many literacy campaigns have failed because of lack of suitable reading material for the 'borderline' literates.

What part is the Tanganyika Library Service playing in post-literacy education? With the enaction of the Tanganyika Library Services Board Act of 1963, The Tanganyika Library Service has been given the responsibility of promoting, establishing, equipping, managing maintaining and developing libraries in mainland Tanzania.

When the President officially opened the Headquarters of the Tanganyika Library Service on 9th December, 1967 he stressed that the real importance to our nation of the National Central Library derives from the fact that it is the hub of the wheel, from which spokes will reach out to towns and villages throughout mainland Tanzania.

At present there are branch and sub-branch libraries at Arusha, Dukoba, Iringa, Kahama, Kibaha, Korogwe, Moshi, Mwanza, Mtwara, and Tanga. A new library is being built at Mbeya. In addition, rural mobile libraries operate from Mwanza, Tanga and Kibaha. Loan collections are provided to/a wide variety of institutions including ujamaa villages and /a there is/ nation-wide postal library service.

The current Five Year Development Plan (1969-1974) lays emphasis on the extension of services to rural areas in line with the policy of Government. Perhaps it is appropriate here to say a few words about our experiences with rural mobile libraries.

The mobile libraries operate on a two week cycle. Borrowers exchange their books once in a fortnight and the mobile vans try to visit the same place at the same time every after two weeks.

One of the biggest problems facing the rural library service and the adult education programme in general is lack of suitable reading material for new literates. So far there are only about 500 titles in Kiswahili and most of them are unsuitable for adults. The mobile libraries have been in operation for about two years and most of the books have been read. People are asking for more books.

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What is to be done? The publication of books and other reading material is not the responsibility of libraries alone. The work involves all those who are concerned with adult literacy e.g. planners of literacy campaigns, literacy teachers, authors, printers, publishers etc.

The Tanganyika Library Service is promoting the publication of books by guaranteeing a market for new books. This is made possible through the purchase of multiple copies which are distributed to all service points in the country.

As an interim measure the Tanganyika Library Service and the Tanzania Publishing House are trying to launch a translation project. But the translation of English titles into Kiswahili has its problems. A lot of the books need extensive editing and re-writing, in order to adopt them to the Tanzanian Cultural environment. On trying to select titles for translation some of the following drawbacks have been encountered:

(a) Some of the books are a bit too out of date and colonial-minded to make them suitable for translation in present Tanzania
(b) Many of them need to be edited and re-written extensively
(c) A lot of them are too-complicated in style and need simplification.

All this means that a lot of work has to be done before translation is done. It also means there must be qualified people to do the job!

Because of the great demand for books at present the translation projects must go hand in hand with the publication of new books. Here again there are problems.

Participants in the Unesco Regional Training Course on Publishing Management which took place in Nairobi from 14th August to 9th September, 1972 made the following observations regarding the problems confronting the book trade in Africa[3]:

1. "That there is an almost complete absence of suitable reading material for the new literates emerging from the accelerated educational programmes in all African Countries. Where material is made available by foreign publishers, it is observed that these publishers are naturally interested in the commercial aspects of publishing rather than in contributing towards

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.....4/.....

2. That the need for organized distribution networks capable of absorbing the hoped-for supply of both educational and general books depends on the development of libraries... which are lacking in most African Countries.
3. That there is an absence of printing facilities for large scale book production in most African Countries.
4. That there is a lack of experienced educational writers and illustrators in Africa.
5. That there is a crippling paucity of funds to finance the book industry.
6. That book production in Africa is minimal. According to Unesco statistics the level of book stocks presently available is 24 pages per person
7. That Governments in Africa should come to the aid of the book industry either to encourage the establishment of indigenous publishing houses wholly African owned with African expertise and management, or to establish publishing houses themselves when private capital is not available.

The observations which have been made highlight the problems facing the book trade in Africa in general. Tanzania is no exception. To ensure that there is an adequate supply of reading material for post literates there is an urgent need for setting up a statutory National Book Development Council consisting of publishers, booksellers, librarians as well as representatives of government departments, and parastatal organizations. The objectives of the council should be:

(a) to establish appropriate planning machineries for the adequate provision of books
(b) to coordinate all efforts of the various book professions towards book production, distribution and promotion.
(c) to develop and strengthen the infrastructure of the book community
(d) to conduct studies and research on problems relevant to book development, and
(e) to train skilled manpower needed for book development.

The fact that other countries such as India, Malaysia, Singapore and the Phillipines have established Book Development Councils and that Ceylon, Pakistan, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, among others, intend to establish Book Development Council reflects the priority to be given to book production.

The establishment of a body of this kind in Tanzania at this time is of utmost importance as there are uncoordinated efforts in the production of books among ministries, parastatal organizations and other institutions which has resulted in inefficiency, waste of manpower and funds.

Now what type of books are needed for libraries and particularly for post literacy education? Generally speaking people read for pleasure, information, knowledge and entertainment. But what do new literates want to read? Adult neoliterates like anybody else usually are interested in matters directly concerning their daily life and occupations eg. agriculture, health, folklore etc. The books must sustain their interest and enthusiasm and they must be useful. It can be generally summarized that any books produced for post literacy education must fulfill one or several of the following requirements:

(a) They must promote adult literacy
(b) They must improve the economic condition of the people
(c) They must improve health and sanitation of the literates
(d) They must educate the people for democratic citizenship. Unless a person is adequately educated and enlightened, he remains susceptible to propaganda.
(e) Lastly the books must enhance cultural, recreational and aesthetic activities.

In short the books must induce especially the rural people to receive new ideas and techniques as well as promote better living and create the psychology for accepting social changes which would obliterate traditional social prejudices

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It is therefore essential that before any books for new literates are written research, must be conducted to find out the readers' interests.

A trial-and error-method cannot be adopted as it is costly. The Tanganyika Library Service conducts research from time to time to find out what books people read, and for what reasons. The findings form guidelines for the book selection policy.

Once the reading interests have been known the manuscripts must be evaluated first by pre-testing and then by post-testing. The pre-testing stage is the time when the suitability of the manuscript in draft form is tried on a selected group of people and the necessary revisions made accordingly as a result of feedback information.

The post-testing stage involves readership surveys of the number and type of books bought and read and if possible some research must be conducted on their effect upon social-economic development and so on. However it must be noted that it is difficult to measure the impact of reading materials especially those distributed freely. Sales figures appear to be the only genuine method of evaluating the popularity and usefulness of books.

Hitherto I have dwelt at length on some of the problems facing the book trade, the publishing industry and writers in general. This may appear to be a digression. But it is not. I hope this background information will create an awareness of the problems which confront libraries. Libraries do not operate in a vacuum. The provision of suitable material for literates or any other people for that matter by libraries is very much influenced by external factors normally beyond the control of librarians.

As C Jeffries has summarized very well in his book entitled Illiteracy: a world problem, "the provision of reading material presents a problem in itself of such magnitude as almost to overshadow the problem of organizing teaching illiteracy. The publications have to be numerous and varied to sustain interest. They have to deal with matters which are relevant to the daily life of the people concerned. They have to be graded in vocabulary and syntax

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"Nor is it of any use to produce follow-up literature, he continues unless it can be got into the readers hands. It must be provided in sufficient numbers. It has to be transported and distributed probably over a wide area of scattered villages and settlements linted by poor communications. It has to be made available free of charge, or at any rate at a nominal price which is unlikely to bear any relation to the cost of production and distribution."[4]

The provision of follow-up literature in sufficient numbers and a nation-wide distribution of it, free of charge, cannot be possible unless there is a well-organized public library system. With funds at its disposal the Tanganyika Library Service is trying to meet the library needs of the nation.

After all, where in a country with a small per capita income, are the new literates to get their reading material if not through a free public service?

References

1. Roy, N.R. Adult Education in India and abroad. Delhi. S. Chand and Co. 1967. p. 16.
2. Ibid. p. 27.
3. UNESCO. African publishing to-day and to-morrow Nairobi. 1972
4. Jeffries, C. pp 105-106.

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